

City of Newton, Massachusetts

Fact Sheet: SOURCE REDUCTION



Too Much Trash

- Americans generate 4 pounds of trash per person per day, a rate that has doubled since 1950.
- The total waste produced in the U.S. has doubled since 1960 to 180 million tons a year including:
 - 3.5 billion pounds of carpet waste yearly – enough to carpet 219 malls.
 - 28 billion pounds of food waste - more sales than McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King combined.
 - 19 billion pounds of packaging peanuts would fill 7 Metro Dome stadiums.
 - 40% of municipal garbage is yard and kitchen waste.

Yet, other industrialized nations with comparable standards of living, such as Germany and Japan, generate only 2 pounds of waste per person per day.

Reuse and Recycle

Through Newton's active recycling programs, the amount of trash in the waste stream has been reduced:

- Between 1995 and 2002, recycling increased from 39.8% to 43.5%.
- Of the nearly 30,000 tons of waste produced in 2002, about 8,000 tons were recyclables and 5,800 tons were yard waste.

Reduce

Recycling is not enough! The full benefits of waste reduction and resource efficiency will come through source reduction. Source Reduction is the first "R" strategy in solid waste management followed by Reuse and Recycle. *If waste is not created, it does not need to be recycled or disposed of.*

Source reduction prevents or reduces waste during its production rather than managing it after its generation. Waste reduction programs maximize the use of materials before they are recycled or thrown away:

- **Using** reusable instead of disposable materials
- **Eliminating** a particular item altogether
- **Repairing** or maintaining equipment
- **Buying** more durable products
- **Buying** recycled products

Benefits of Source Reduction

The goal of waste prevention is to more efficiently utilize resources by examining how business is conducted, how materials are used, and what products are purchased. The City will reap a number of benefits from waste prevention efforts.

- **Cost Savings** - Waste prevention saves dollars through changes in operations, more conscientious use of supplies and products, and purchasing environmentally preferable products.
- **Safer Buildings and Schools** - Eliminating hazardous materials from municipal buildings and schools by purchasing less or non-toxic products reduces exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- **Resource Conservation** - Buying environmentally friendly products reduces the use of natural resources, supports markets for recycled materials, reduces production and marketing costs, and stimulates business and employment opportunities.
- **Improving Quality of Life** – Source reduction reduces traffic congestion and air emissions, prevents contamination of water supplies, and preserves non-renewable resources and habitat.

We Can Do It!

The City of Newton's Source Reduction Project will work with municipal and school departments, residents, and businesses to identify ways to reduce waste and to purchase more environmentally friendly products.



Source: City of Newton [Green Pages](#); Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance; U. S. Environmental Protection Agency; Congressional Research Services

Source Reduction Checklist

Reduce Goods and Materials: Purchasing Decisions

- Purchase products with minimal packaging and with packaging that is recyclable
- Buy products in concentrate or bulk form
- Look for products that are made from recycled material
- Buy local produce since it requires less packaging and transportation
- Use reusable or refillable products and those with a longer life span and easy to repair
- Avoid products that contain toxic ingredients
- Get your name off junk-mail lists

Reuse and Recycle

- Donate usable goods to a charity
- Use your own cloth or paper bags when shopping
- Take a reusable mug to work instead of using disposable cups
- Conserve water with flow devices in shower and toilet
- Fix leaky faucets
- Use a lunchbox instead of a bag
- Circulate magazines to friends or neighbors
- Reuse gift wrap again for a smaller package
- Use scrap paper that is printed on one side for phone messages or notes
- Repair appliances instead of buying new ones
- Take household hazardous waste to the Recycling Depot for reuse or disposal
- Compost yard waste and food scraps
- Save used gift wrap to use again on a smaller package
- Grass-cycle - leave grass on the lawn after mowing
- Reuse greeting cards by using the front flap as a post card
- Use flatware or reusable plastic items for parties

Be a Strong Consumer

- Let store managers know the kind of products you want them to carry
- Ask for products that aren't over-packaged or in returnable containers
- Let manufacturers know any concerns you have on products or packaging

Today's purchases affect tomorrow's environment.